



State of Utah

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### NEWS RELEASE

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## Outdoor Lightning Safety

### *Lightning Safety Awareness Week Continues*

#### Keep in Mind:

- Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.
- You are in danger from lightning if you can hear thunder.
- Lightning injuries can lead to permanent disabilities or death. On average, at least 10% of strike victims die; 70% of survivors suffer serious long term effects.

#### Do the Following:

- ✓ **Postpone activities promptly, don't wait for rain.** Many people take shelter from the rain, but most people struck by lightning are not in the rain! Go quickly inside a completely enclosed building. If no enclosed building is convenient, get inside a hard-topped all-metal vehicle.
- ✓ **Be the lowest point. Lightning usually strikes the tallest object.** In the mountains if you are above the timberline, you **ARE** the highest object around. Quickly get below the timberline and get into a grove of small trees. Crouch down if you are in an exposed area.
- ✓ **Keep an eye on the sky.** Look for darkening skies, flashes of lightning, or increasing wind, which may be signs of an approaching thunderstorm.
- ✓ **Listen for the sound of thunder.** If you can hear thunder, go to a safe shelter immediately.
- ✓ **If you see lightning, hear a thunderstorm coming, or your hair stands on end, immediately suspend your game or practice and instruct everyone to go inside a sturdy building or vehicle.**
- ✓ **Listen to NOAA Weather Radio.** Coaches and other leaders should listen for tone-alert warnings, as well as forecasts for thunderstorms, during practice sessions and games.
- ✓ **If you can't get to a shelter, stay away from trees.** If there is no shelter, crouch down in the open, keeping twice as far away from a tree as it is tall.
- ✓ **Avoid leaning against vehicles.** Get off bicycles and motorcycles.
- ✓ **Get out of the water. It's a great conductor of electricity.** Stay off the beach and out of small boats or canoes. If caught in a boat, crouch down in the center of the boat away from metal hardware. Swimming, wading, snorkeling, and scuba diving are NOT safe. Lightning can strike the water and travel some distance beneath and away from its point of contact
- ✓ **Avoid metal!** Drop metal backpacks, stay away from clothes lines, fences, exposed sheds, and electrically conductive elevated objects. Don't hold on to metal items such as golf clubs, fishing rods, tennis rackets, or tools. Large metal objects can conduct lightning.
- ✓ **Move away from a group of people.** Don't share a bleacher bench or huddle in a group.